

Our Study of Revelation (what it is and what it isn't)

- As stated in Fall 2025 when this class began, these Lessons on Revelation are intended to reflect the majority view of recognized theologians of the Reformed Tradition, people like R.C. Sproul, James Montgomery Boice, and Tim Keller.
- Both Gary Cosby and I generally agree with that interpretative position. In this class, there is no intent to discourage legitimate questions about other views.
- Unfortunately, however, I cannot devote a significant portion of our limited time to dealing with alternate interpretative schemes like that of premillennial dispensationalism or related theories.
- Many of us were raised in an environment where the books of Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, and related authors were everyday fare. What many of us, including myself, did not hear growing up was views from the Reformed Perspective.
- That reformed viewpoint (that I missed earlier) is what I now believe to be most accurate. So I am presenting that viewpoint to you. After all, we are a church that is “reformed” in Biblical perspective and should at least be acquainted with the reformed viewpoint on Revelation.
- When we began this study, I presented outlines of the 4 major viewpoints on interpreting Revelation. As we go along, each of us will inevitably have questions about the true meaning of certain passages of Scripture. Wonderful! Let’s discuss those concerns and probe for a Biblical answer.
- Now, another look at the position from which we began.

Revelation Part 33A – Part 1 (Another Look) - 2026 **Dr. Lamar Allen**

1. **Introduction:** Revelation – 22 chapters, 404 verses. We are now at the midway point – beginning chapter 12. Most people consider Revelation difficult to understand. Undeniably, interpretations of Revelation do differ significantly both in details and perspective – varying from “most of what is written in Revelation has already happened” to “most of what is written in Revelation is still to happen.”
 - Winston Churchill once described the former Soviet Union as a “*riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.*” Many Christians (most?) would accept that statement as a good description of Revelation.
 - Yet, the first few verses of Revelation show that John, himself, believed the visions he saw were not only understandable but would bring comfort, courage, and hope to God’s people through what they reveal about God and His plan for the ages.
2. **4-Sentence Summary of Revelation:** On earth, there is an ongoing spiritual war. God sovereignly rules the universe and will win! He will cause history’s consummation as He chooses. That consummation will be consistent with God’s plan to have for Himself a holy people who can (that is, are able to) live in eternity with Him (Heb 12:14, “*without holiness no one will see the Lord*”). Christ is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end.
3. **Jumping to the End - Revelation 21:1-2:** *Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.*

4. **Revelation 21:3:** *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*
5. **Revelation does not Consist of Puzzles and Riddles:** Although Revelation’s symbolic language seems strange to us, it was not so to the original recipients. John’s intent was to give believers a clear, understandable message, not to give them puzzles to be resolved.
 - John literally saw and heard the visions, but his written descriptions of the visions were symbolic not literal. Symbolic language often has layers of meaning, primary and secondary meanings.
 - “Revelation” means to reveal, unveil, make known. John do so using symbolic language. Revelation was in the form of a letter sent to 7 churches in Asia Minor. There were no copying machines, so a handwritten copy of John’s document circulated to all 7 churches to be read aloud to each congregation.
 - John was convinced the letter would be understood by his first-century recipients without needing a specialist to interpret it for them. It is not for experts to explain but for ordinary people to understand.
6. **Revelation 1:1-3:** *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,² who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.*
7. **Revelation 1:4-8:** *John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,⁵ and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.*
8. **Revelation 1:9-11a:** *I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet¹¹ saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches.”*
9. **Revelation 1:12-13a:** *Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man.*
10. **Revelation 1:19-20:** *Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.*
11. **Revelation’s Focus:** Revelation is Christ-centered throughout. Christ is alpha and omega, the beginning and end. He is the mediator of God’s plan for history.
12. **Spiritual War:** On earth today, there continues to be spiritual war that began in heaven ages ago. Lucifer, a powerful and beautiful angel led a rebellion against God.
13. **Cause of Lucifer’s Rebellion:** Lucifer (a great angel) had great power and beauty but was consumed by pride. His magnificent capabilities impressed him so much, he believed he could be God’s equal. Pride led to his downfall. His name became Satan. His rebellion led to a war that has not yet ended.

14. **The War's Beginning - Revelation 12:3:** *Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads.* (The dragon is Satan).
15. **Revelation 12:7-9:** *Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸ But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*
16. **A Later View of Satan's Downfall - Isaiah 14:12-14:** *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'"*
 - Lucifer (Satan) and other fallen angels were defeated and cast from heaven to earth. Satan lost that battle. The war continued but its focus shifted to earth.
 - As will be seen in Revelation, the war will not end until Satan and his forces are totally defeated.
17. **God's Goal:** God's goal is to have for Himself a holy people living eternally in His presence. To live in His presence, people must be holy (Heb 12:14). Rev 21:3b reveals the realization of that goal.
18. **Revelation 21:3b:** *"Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*
19. **Satan's Goal:** Satan's desire is to possess sovereign control like God, becoming the god of as many people as possible. He opposes God. While there is no possibility he can replace God or be like Him, but Satan can counterfeit at least some of God's actions, and that is what he does.
20. **Satan the Counterfeiter:** God originates. Satan counterfeits. Satan is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Lies are counterfeits of truth – untruth presented as truth.
21. **Satan (the Red Dragon):** Revelation 12:3, 9 represent Satan (the fallen Lucifer) as a great dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. He is a powerful counterfeit of God. In 13:1a, the Dragon (Satan), the counterfeit God, stands on the shore of a sea and from the sea brings forth a strange great Beast.
 - Satan (Dragon) wants to be like God but cannot. So, he counterfeits God's actions using 2 beasts.
22. **Revelation 13:1b-3a:** *And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ² The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. ³ One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed.*
 - The Beast coming out of the sea has seven heads. It is an image of the Dragon (Satan). Both Dragon and Beast have two horns representing power, strength, and authority. The Dragon has crowns on his head. His image, the Beast, has crowns on his horns. The Beast is to the Dragon what Christ is to the Father.
 - The Beast is in the image of the counterfeit God (the Dragon) as a counterfeit "Son of God." The Beast, as a counterfeit Christ, has a healed wound on one of his seven heads that appears as though it was fatal. It wasn't. He didn't die. So, he wasn't resurrected.
 - The head-wound could have been fatal but wasn't. Counterfeiting the true resurrection, the Beast appears to be one who died from a head wound and yet lives.
23. **Beast out of the Earth:** A new Beast appears in Rev 13:11-15 out of the earth.

24. **Revelation 13:11-12:** *Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon.* ¹² *It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.*
- This beast is identified as a false prophet (Rev 16:13). He is a counterfeit of the Holy Spirit. He spreads propaganda to convince people to follow the Dragon.
 - The Dragon, Beast, and False Prophet together form a counterfeit Trinity. Satan's plan is to bring all mankind under his own rule.
 - The Beast (counterfeit Christ) with help from the beast out of the earth (counterfeit Holy Spirit who can work miraculous signs) are to bring Satan's plan to fruition.
25. **Revelation 13:13-15:** *And it (counterfeit Christ) performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people.* ¹⁴ *Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived.* ¹⁵ *The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.*
- Those who follow the Beast (Rev 13:16-18) are in danger both from his bestial tyranny and of becoming like him. People become like that which they fervently follow.
 - The psalmist says of idolators, *"Their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes but they cannot see ... Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust them"* (Ps 115:4-8).
 - The desire of people who follow the Lamb is to be like Christ and be among those who abide with Christ in God's presence in the New Jerusalem (Rev 22:4).
 - Knowing Satan is intrinsically a counterfeiter can help believers understand and prepare for the spiritual warfare Satan and his minions wage against them. Beware of counterfeits.
 - Those who follow Christ are increasingly conformed to Christ's image (2 Cor 3:18). By analogy, those who follow the Beast are increasingly conformed to the one they follow.
 - Satan's plan to be like God will fool many people. Protection from attraction to Satan's plan is found only by being "in Christ."
 - Satan's desire to be like God is the primary cause of the spiritual war that goes on and on.
 - Those who oppose God and His plan must be stopped and they must be punished for rebellion. Hence, the Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl judgments.
26. **Next:** Onward to chapter 12.